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JESUS CHRIST: MAN OF
SORROWS

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JESUS CHRIST: MAN OF SORROWS

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INTRODUCTION

The wise of all ages have searched their own hearts and the ways of God in the world to find a satisfying answer to the problems of the intrusion of evil in the form of pain and suffering into human life. As a punishment for evil in the form of sin it is intelligible. It fits in with our sense of retributive justice that the evil-doer should pay by suffering the penalty of his ill deeds. The root of the difficulty is not here. But it is rather in seeing the inevitableness of suffering regardless, apparently, of the sufferer's deserts, and in its at least seeming needlessness at times, that our reason is puzzled to understand and our power of will is tested to keep back rebellious surgings.

Human experience does indeed show that the power to endure suffering is the proof of manhood. "What else," asks the writer of this book, "do we mean by the phrase, 'to be a man,' than to be ready to face suffering when it comes?" Endurance begets hardi-

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hood, and hardihood is counted among the cardinal virtues, under the name of fortitude. This indeed we can recognize. But who for the seeing of this or of any other answer human wisdom has been able to find has ever felt his questionings satisfied or his promptings to rebellion stilled?

There is, however, a divine answer to the problem, and this answer alone can meet our need of understanding and comfort. The wisdom of God makes it to our faith in the person of the Word of God made Flesh. Jesus Christ, the Man of Sorrows, is the divine and sufficient answer.

In His life, though He might have claimed exemption, He nevertheless accepted suffering as His lot. In His teaching, without attempting to explain or justify its occurrence in human life, He points out to us its significance in the values of eternal life. His death imparts to it a consecration and to our sufferings borne in the following of Him a redeeming grace. And those who had been His disciples are shown to us as most worthy of Him in that they counted it all joy to be allowed to suffer in His name.

No doubt it will be said that after all this does not clear up for us the mystery of suffer-

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ing. The mystery indeed remains. Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, it is still hard for us to see what to their Companion was so clear: "Ought not Christ to have suffered and so enter into His glory?" But when we have contemplated the Man of Sorrows as Archbishop Goodier pictures Him for us in these pages, we can at least look upon suffering in a new light—in the light, that is, of the Wisdom of God shown to us in the frailty of human flesh. In Him, the Ideal Man, we can come to see in suffering as typified in His cross "the key to life on earth and in heaven."

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JESUS CHRIST: MAN OF SORROWS

I

INTRODUCTION

§ I. MAN AND SORROW

IN another volume of this series¹ it has been seen how Jesus Christ has shown himself to men as the Model of Manhood. Nevertheless in that study, except as it were in parentheses, one aspect of that Model has been passed over; and that in a true sense the most important aspect. For we cannot think of man in this world without thinking of him in contact with suffering; living in the midst of it, enduring it within himself, when need be going forth to face it, taking it not only as the lot of man, but as one of man's distinguishing features; seeing in it something which in a

¹ Vol. XII, by the same author.

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peculiar way belongs to him apart from all other creatures of this earth, something which he knows to be in the end his glory and his crown.

To enter into a discussion concerning the presence of suffering and sorrow in the life of man would serve no useful purpose here. In the ancient world it was for ever in the minds of men, to pagans a doom, to the Israelites an atonement; though to both there was everlasting hope in the fact that sorrow was, as experience proved, always the close companion of greatness, and strength, and nobility, and virtue. This was the constant theme of ancient tragedy. In the Old Testament it grows as time advances, from the questionings of Job to the definite solutions of the Son of Sirach; suffering an evil, suffering an evil out of which comes good, suffering justified because of its fruits and because of those whose lot it is to bear it.

For us let it be enough to take the facts of life as we find them; and these, or some of these, are not only that suffering and sorrow have always been and always are with us; not only that human nature itself recognizes them as in some way a gift, an atonement for evil done, a means of rising from our dead selves

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to higher things; but, on the other side, that suffering and sorrow bring out from man that which is best in him, which could be brought out in no other way; develops him to his highest point of perfection, as by no other means he could be developed. In the end, as everyday experience proves to us, it is by the standard of suffering, by the power to endure, to stand up to misfortune, when duty or love calls to be ready to meet it, that man is most inclined to judge and reward his fellow-man.

That which man suffers, silently, willingly, generously, is that which, when discovered, wins the regard, the esteem, the love of others; indeed, what else do we mean by the phrase, "to be a man," than to be ready to face suffering when it comes? Readiness to suffer beats down all opposition; its acceptance is taken to condone much that might otherwise be amiss. When we have nothing else to say of any man, let us but show that he has suffered much, and willingly, and for a cause that has been worthy of his manhood, and at once other things are passed over. It may indeed be a hard saying; in daily life we may shun it, and seek every means to avoid it; that is only to acknowledge that suffering is suffering, it does not deny that the bravery to face it is a gift than which

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man, as man, holds none greater. When we dream our dreams of youth we may put before it many other ideals; but we know very well, and youth itself knows well, that there is no ideal to compare with the power to suffer, no matter under what form suffering may appear. To be able to suffer is to be a man; to accept it when it comes is to be noble; voluntarily to choose it for a worthy cause is to be a hero; heroism has no other definition.

§ 2. JESUS CHRIST AND SORROW

All this, it is obvious, must come within the scope of an ideal of manhood; indeed, it must be its whole background, giving a meaning to whatever else is said. If, then, we see in Jesus Christ the Model of Manhood, this, too, will be conspicuous in him, and that in its highest form; the Model of Man will in some way be the Model Man of Sorrows. And it is so. We speak not only of the Passion, though that alone, its cause, its course, and its issue, voluntarily undergone, for no other reason but that other men might be the gainers, their burthen shouldered that they might be set free, would of itself suffice to win for him, *par excellence*, the title of the Ideal

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Man of Sorrows. But we speak also of his whole career; of all that life which, from the day when he came among men to the end, was one of self-annihilation and subjection,¹ of injustice and mental agony, of contempt and failure and lonely struggle against ingratitude and hatred, of interior trial whose mere shadow, flitting from time to time across the surface, gives us no more than an idea of that which was endured within.

We speak, moreover, of one who alone of all men had no occasion to suffer; who, from the very nature of his being, knew what suffering and sorrow were more than any other man could know them; who from the very first foresaw all that was to come to him, and yet at every step deliberately chose it for himself; who at any given moment might have said, with more than justice on his side, that what he had thus far endured was enough and the rest would have been spared him; who, nevertheless, in ways we can see for ourselves and in ways we cannot hope to discover, took into his soul every barb of sorrow that was hurled at him, every grief that it falls to the lot of man to bear.

We say we cannot hope to discover the full extent of the sufferings and sorrows of Jesus

¹ Phil. ii 6.

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Christ. For we are dealing with one who was not only man but was also God; what was the consequence of that union on his capacity for suffering, who shall attempt to describe? True, as God he could not suffer; but as man, as God-man, set to bear the sorrows of men and to carry their griefs, he must have been, and on the evidence of Scripture was, a subject for suffering beyond all means of ours to measure. The knowledge and foreknowledge it implied; the knowledge of evil, natural and supernatural, in itself and in its consequences, in regard to God and in regard to the evil-doer, man; the foreknowledge of all that was to come, making all suffering, his own and that of others, always vividly before his eyes; the ever-present realization of the Father, what we dimly guess at when we speak of the Beatific Vision, and yet in some mysterious way the brighter light causing the blacker darkness, till his soul was "sorrowful unto death"; the fine-wrought nature, of body, and mind, and soul, belonging of necessity to him who was God-man—all these considerations, and there are many more, can be but touched upon, yet do they open out vistas of suffering which must make, whatever any man may say, a mere shadow of the truth and no more. From time to time a saint has

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been given the grace to see and realize, and the sight has drawn the blood from his own body, and opened wounds in his hands, and feet, and side; the rest of us can but look on, content with the little we may learn, knowing very well that the whole of the truth is as the ocean to the running brook.

Still, leaving all this aside, we have more than enough for our purpose. Confining ourselves to just that which human eyes can see and no more, to just that which Jesus Christ endured on the plane of other men, we shall still find in him the Ideal Man of Sorrows; ideal in that which he endured, insomuch as none endured more; ideal in the way he endured it, so that not one drop of the chalice was permitted to escape him; ideal in the motive which prompted him; ideal in the full deliberation with which he bore it all to the end; ideal, last of all, in the fruit his suffering has borne, both in the merit of his sacrifice and in the example he has given to mankind. The merit of his sacrifice we may leave to another volume of this series,¹ we may rather dwell on the Man of Sorrows as such, and what his life of sorrow has meant here and now. That because of the sufferings of Jesus Christ this world has become another place

¹ See Vol. XIV.

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no one who has eyes to see, certainly no Christian, will deny; Christianity itself, with its standard of the cross, and its civilization ranged around the cross, is the abiding confession of this truth. However much in real life human frailty may induce us to pass him by, still in matter of fact the Christ in whom we believe is Christ crucified; and crucified, not on Calvary alone, but from the first hour of his life in Bethlehem. This is the Jesus Christ who has won the hearts of men in all ages, who has stirred them to great things, who has poured himself out over all the world and wherever he has reached has transformed it.

II

THE MAN OF SORROWS IN HIS LIFE

§ I. THE BEGINNINGS

"He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not" (John i 10, 11).

ON many accounts these two sentences may be taken as the text of the Gospel of St John. After many years of reflexion, after a generation and more of the new Church's life, this is the summary impression left upon him of his Master's sojourn in the world, this is the side of it which he deems most worthy of remembrance by the children who are to come after him. Again and again during the course of his Gospel he comes back upon the same thought, now in his own words and comments, now in the words of our Lord Jesus Christ himself. Underneath all else that happened, underneath whatever other sufferings there might have been, this unending agony was always gnawing at his heart, that he came

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among men, and men from first to last refused to know him, that he gave himself without reserve to those nearest to him, and they would have nothing to do with him or with what he had to give them.

St Luke, though he begins his Gospel with quite another object in view, soon is compelled to reveal the same colours in his picture. At first he is filled with all the glory of the Incarnation; nevertheless, even as he tells the story of it, he cannot conceal the tremor of her who "was troubled" at the angel's salutation, who "pondered" what it might portend, who in the end accepted with submission her anxious destiny, surmising well enough much that it would imply:

"Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word."¹

Nor can he hide the background of privation and suffering, and distress in the scene of the Child's first coming into the world:

"And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him up in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger: because there was no room for them in the inn."²

At the outset, in the midst of all the joy of

¹ Luke i 38.

² Luke ii 7.

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the story, St Luke has to own it: Jesus Christ, the Son of God, of whose kingdom there was to be no end, was born on the roadside, a homeless outcast, the shivering child of a tramp or little more.

There follows the Circumcision, the first blood-shedding of the Child, the price of the name he was to bear, the foreshadowing of the further price that must one day be paid that the promise contained in that name might be completely fulfilled. Immediately after is recorded the prophecy which at once puts the Gospel of St Luke on the same plane with that of St John. It would almost seem that in spite of himself Luke is forced to set the future suffering and rejection of Jesus in the forefront of his picture:

"And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother: Behold this child is set for the fall and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted. And thy own soul a sword shall pierce, that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed."¹

In perfect harmony with these is the Gospel of St Matthew. No sooner has the Evangelist introduced his subject, recording the genealogy,² and the anxious doubting of

¹ Luke ii 34, 35.

² Matt. i 1-17.

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the foster-father,¹ than he passes at once to the first scene of terror and ill-foreboding—the coming of the Magi, the proved understanding of the priests and their first rejection of the light, the craftiness and enmity of Herod, the massacre of the innocents, the lonely, homeless wandering of the Holy Family in Egypt.²

Thus did Jesus Christ come into the world, each step marked with suffering and sorrow, and it would seem with needless sorrow, that might easily have been avoided, ending in a cruel orgy of blood. When it is all pieced together, one asks oneself whether any other child has been born into the world under circumstances quite so tragic. With blood so smeared across the first page of his history, and that the blood of helpless infants, with first impressions those of an exile hiding from the hand of death, it was inevitable that in after years he should have blood and death constantly before his eyes. When he grew up, and among the hills of Nazareth reflected on the cruel fact that his birth had occasioned the murder of so many children and the misery of so many mothers, we can understand in part the natural source of that deep sympathy for children and mothers which

¹ Matt. i 18-25.

² Matt. ii 1-18.

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marked him till his own death upon the cross. The prophecy of Jeremias, fulfilled thus early in his childhood, could never cease ringing in his ears:

"A voice in Rama was heard, lamentation and great mourning; Rachel bewailing her children and would not be comforted, because they are not."¹

§ 2. NAZARETH

For one in sympathy with the hidden life at Nazareth it is not difficult to understand the agony of the long waiting. Thirty years of any life is a long time; by the end of it the glamour and hope of youth has in great part disappeared. But in a country village such as Nazareth, under such drab conditions as those which he encountered, the glamour is stillborn, and the years drag on into featureless maturity. The monotony of that life; the companionship of men who saw and could see nothing, whose horizon was confined to the rough village street that crawled up that hillside, who understood and were fixed to understand less than nothing, whose narrow prejudice could never tolerate that any man

¹ Matt. ii 18.

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from among themselves should rise above their own level; the coarse familiarities, the boorish manner, the galling condescensions, the patronizing, the rough language of men blinded with their own conceit; the work among men with whom gratitude was evidently a thing unknown, who could take as of course and without remark, as though it were their right, the service of one who gave lavishly; who could find a cause of complaint in the fact that he gave with the same lavish hand to others than themselves—this was but the everyday atmosphere in which he lived, and which for twenty long years never varied.

And on his own side, as his later history revealed, the quick, sensitive, responsive nature, alive to every touch of joy or pain; the insight, deeper than that of any man, into the souls of other men, so that nothing lay hidden from him, no falsehood, no scheming, no treachery, no sin; the sympathy with another's sorrow that came of self-forgetfulness, and overflowed on every soul about it; the service freely rendered, the spontaneous generosity; the keen longing to do good and the agony because he was not allowed to do it—all these must be brought into the picture if we would estimate aright the human endurance of the thirty years.

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This is no mere conjecture, it is no abstract consideration of what must or might have been; it is more than confirmed by the events that followed. Nazareth, in the esteem even of other Galilæans, was nowhere; and a man from Nazareth was nobody. Not only have we no mention whatever of Nazareth, either in Old Testament history or in any contemporary document; not only have we proof of the profound contempt for the Nazarene among his neighbours—

“Can anything of good come out of Nazareth?”¹

—the Nazarenes themselves made it clear enough what manner of men they were, what esteem they had of one another. When at the beginning of his public life Jesus came back among them bringing the good tidings:

“They rose up and thrust him out of the city: and they brought him to the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. But he, passing through the midst of them, went his way.”²

Again another time he came to them, after they had had more opportunity to learn. His miracles they could not deny; his teaching

¹ John i 47.

² Luke iv 29, 30.

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they tacitly acknowledged; this only they could not endure, that he should be only a Nazarene, no more than one of themselves.

"How came this man by all these things? And what wisdom is this that is given to him, and such mighty works as are wrought by his hands? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joseph, and Jude, and Simon? Are not also his sisters here with us? And they were scandalized in regard of him."¹

Another sign we have yet later. His very kindred were, many of them, no more appreciative than the rest. To them, after all his labours, he was little more than a prodigy, a nine days' wonder, a conjurer who might take a turn at a village fair or city festival. When towards the end of his life he delayed his journey to Jerusalem:

"His brethren said to him: Pass from hence and go into Judæa, that thy disciples also may see the works which thou dost. For there is no man doth anything in secret; and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, manifest thyself to the world. For neither did his brethren believe in him."²

These, then, were the kind of people with

¹ Mark vi 2, 3.

² John vii 3-5.

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whom he had lived from childhood, who were called his kindred; and this was all the impression he had made upon them, even he, Jesus Christ!

"And he wondered at their unbelief."¹

"No prophet is accepted in his own country."

"The enemies of a man are those of his own household."

"Blessed is he that shall not be scandalized in me."²

When Jesus spoke thus, he spoke from grating experience. Though he was the Son of God, though he was the son of Mary, though he was of the house of David, he had little to boast of in most of his kindred and connexions.

§ 3. CAPHARNAUM

Jesus left Nazareth. He came to Capharnaum by the Lake of Galilee, and there took up his abode, so that later it could be called "his own city." Here for a few brief months we are given the impression that he had some superficial success and consolation. He called followers to him, and they re-

¹ Mark vi 6.

² Luke vii 23.

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sponded. He worked miracles in abundance among the people, and they were carried away with enthusiasm; indeed, it would seem that their devotedness, so thoughtless, so hollow, so self-centred, so boisterous, so little considerate of him and of his common needs, soon became a burden to him, and he had to escape it—

“So that they could not so much as eat bread.”¹

“So that he could not go openly into the city, but was without in desert places.”²

“And he retired into the desert and prayed.”³

Nevertheless the little consolation he might have had from this oppressive but well-meaning crowd was soon taken from him. Scarcely has the period of miracles and teaching begun than we hear of:

“Scribes and doctors of the law sitting by, that were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judæa, and Jerusalem;”⁴

men prepared to misinterpret and take scandal from every word he said:

“Who is this that speaketh blasphemies?”⁵ to carp at everything he did:

¹ Mark iii 20.

² Mark i 45.

³ Luke v 16.

⁴ Luke v 17.

⁵ Luke v 21.

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"But the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying to his disciples: Why do you eat and drink with publicans and sinners?"¹

"Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and the disciples of the Pharisees in like manner, but thine eat and drink?"²

"Behold thy disciples do that which it is not lawful to do on the sabbath days."³

"And the scribes and Pharisees watched if he would heal on the sabbath day; that they might find an accusation against him;"⁴

men ready to ascribe any motive to him, rather than own the patent truth:

"He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of devils he casteth out devils."⁵

"Behold a man that is a glutton and a wine drinker, a friend of publicans and sinners;"⁶

men, last of all, who, when nothing else would serve, must seek any means to be rid of him:

"And they were filled with madness";⁷
"and the Pharisees going out immediately

¹ Luke v 30.

² Luke v 33.

³ Matt. xii 1.

⁴ Luke vi 7.

⁵ Mark iii 22.

⁶ Matt. xi. 19.

⁷ Luke vi 11.

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made a consultation with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.”¹

Such are passages to be found in the earliest accounts of his preaching by the Lake of Galilee. Death at Bethlehem, death at Nazareth, death at Capharnaum, always and everywhere hatred unto death—this is the atmosphere in which from the beginning Jesus lived, and worked his miracles, and preached the kingdom of the Father.

Nor was this all; it was not even the worst. The enemy he knew how to treat; it was the failure of his friends that cut deepest. At first the people of Capharnaum and its neighbourhood were all enthusiasm; very soon they went their own way. It was not long before he had to complain that “hearing they would not hear, nor would they understand.”² A very little later they have become so familiar as to laugh him to scorn when he speaks.³ Yet a little more and there came the great rejection:

“After this, many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him”;⁴ and from that day we hear no more of the crowds in Capharnaum. On the contrary, he is exiled from the place; he is compelled to go abroad.

¹ Mark iii 6.

² Luke viii 53.

³ Matt. xiii 10-17.

⁴ John vi 67.

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When next the name of the town is on his lips, it is uttered from a pierced heart:

"And thou, Capharnaum, shalt thou be exalted up to heaven? Thou shalt go down even unto hell. For if in Sodom had been wrought the miracles that have been wrought in thee, perhaps it had remained unto this day. But I say unto you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgement than for thee."¹

§ 4. JERUSALEM

When we pass from Galilee to Judæa, the opposition from the first is yet more manifest. In Galilee it had arisen, for the most part, from ignorance, and dulness, and the contempt that is mere stupidity; perhaps, too, in Capharnaum, from selfishness and blind guidance; in Jerusalem men were not ignorant, they were not dull, their enmity was founded on suspicion, which soon, as the truth became more manifest, inevitably developed into hatred. Already we have seen its foreshadowing when, thirty years before, the priests and elders had used their knowledge of the Scriptures only to foster Herod's evil

¹ Matt. xi 23, 24.

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mind, not to guide themselves to Bethlehem; now, when as a full-grown man Jesus appeared in their midst, it was war to the death from the beginning. He came and cleansed the Temple court of its buyers and sellers; he was asked for his authority and he gave a sign, the sign of his death and resurrection. Thus, at his first encounter with them, he showed his enemies that he was well aware how the contest would end.

As it began, so the bitterness continued. On the occasion of another festival he came into the city again. At the Probatic Pool he healed the cripple beggar. The poor man had lain there, day in and day out, for nigh on forty years; therefore he must have been known as a kind of institution in the place. But what came of the healing?

"Therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, because he did these things on the sabbath";¹

and when he made an effort to enlighten them, and spoke in his defence:

"Hereupon, therefore, the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he did not only break the sabbath, but also said God was his Father, making himself equal to God."²

¹ John v 16.

² John v 18.

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His answer is not one of rejection. It is the first of those patient, compassionate, all-enduring appeals which throughout his life characterize his language, above all in his visits to the Holy City.

"You will not come to me that you may have life."¹

"I am come in the name of my Father, and you receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him you will receive."²

Never for a moment did the sky clear in Jerusalem; and yet Jerusalem was the apple of his eye. On the contrary, it grew ever darker. If in Nazareth he "wondered at their unbelief," and "he could not work many miracles there because of their unbelief," much more was this true of Jerusalem. In fact, we have a detailed account of only two, and both of these are told us because of the yet greater persecution they entailed.

We need not pursue the subject further; whenever he appeared the story was the same, aggravated only by constant attempts upon his life. It is enough to hear him at the end, more distressed because of what Jerusalem was doing to him than, it would seem, at all

¹ John v 40.

² John v 43.

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the rest besides. Outside the city in the latter days we hear him crying:

"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent to thee, how often would I have gathered thy children as the gird doth her brood under her wings, and thou wouldest not? Behold your house shall be left to you desolate."¹

A short time after, he rides into the city in triumph. But again his pierced heart bleeds.

"And when he drew near, seeing the city, he wept over it, saying: If thou hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace: but now they are hidden from thy eyes. For the days shall come upon thee: and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and straiten thee on every side, and beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children who are in thee. And they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone: because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation."²

¹ Luke xiii 34, 35.

² Luke xx 41-44.

III

THE MAN OF SORROWS IN HIS TEACHING

§ I. TO MEN IN GENERAL

ON a background such as this the life of Jesus was lived. It might be easily expanded to other places: to the wanderings in enforced exile through Tyre, and Sidon, and Decapolis; to the journeys through Peræa, where he was warned that Herod sought to catch him; through Samaria, where the Samaritans would refuse him shelter; through the other parts of Judæa, where, more than ever as the time advanced, his enemies followed him and "watched him," so that for the people's sake he had to turn upon them. When, then, he came to speak of suffering and trial, everyone who heard him knew that from his own experience he had a right to speak, and that what he uttered was the expression of his very soul.

This is one of the fascinations of the Sermon

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on the Mount. What is taught in that sermon might well have been given in many other ways: with command, as a rightful lord and master might have given it; with threats and sanctions, as might a promulgator of laws, even as Moses had done before him, or as John the Baptist had foreshadowed him; with cold aloofness, as might an independent ruler of his people. But it was not an independent, it was a feeling and fellow-suffering soul which prompted the opening of the Sermon with the Eight Beatitudes: blessing for the poor, by one who was himself acquainted with dire poverty; for the meek, from him who was of all men the meekest, and could claim meekness as specially his own; for the mournful, for the hungry after justice, from him who was weighed down by the cruelty and injustice of men all about him; for the merciful and forgiving, a new thing, as he taught it, in those days; for the clean of heart from him who, on that very account, knew and felt more than others the shameful and horror of sin; for the makers of peace; last of all—and this is dwelt upon—for those who suffered persecution. In the conclusion of the series of blessings there was the ring of victory, as of one who had himself already endured and won through:

“Blessed are ye when they shall revile you,

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and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for my sake: be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven. For so they persecuted the prophets that were before you.”¹

This note, once triumphantly sounded, rings through the whole discourse; at intervals the heart that has suffered breaks out, and always the refrain is the same. It is a constant warning against the bitterness that may come of long-endured cruelty, a constant reminder of the reward that awaits sorrow patiently borne.

“But I say to you, not to resist evil: but if one strike thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other. And if a man will contend with thee in judgement, and take away thy coat, let go they cloak also unto him. And whosoever shall force thee one mile, go with him other two.”²

Are such admonitions taken from the life and personal experience of him who uttered them? Knowing him as we do, we are entitled to believe they are; without that confirmation they would have been of little weight; and if they are, what singular light they throw on the days that are hidden from us, at Nazareth, in Capharnaum, in Judæa! Had he been so meek as this? So contemned

¹ Matt. v 11, 12.

² Matt. v 39-41.

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as this? When, then, he come back to Nazareth as a teacher, we may understand a little better why the people of the town "were scandalized because of him."

Listen to him a little further on:

"I say to you, love your enemies: do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute or calumniate you: that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven, who maketh his sun to rise upon the good and bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust."¹

He who said that had himself been hated, had himself been calumniated, had known it and had felt it, and had looked elsewhere for strength to bear it.

Or again:

"Be not solicitous, therefore, saying: What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewith shall we be clothed? For your Father knoweth that you have need of these things."²

He who said that, and all that went before it, had himself shared and endured the squalid poverty and want that stalks through every Eastern town and village like a skeleton in rags. By experience he knew what it meant, and his hearers knew that he knew it. In this

¹ Matt. v 44, 45.

² Matt. vi 31, 32.

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as in all things else he was one with themselves; therefore they accepted the relief he offered them.

"And it came to pass, when Jesus had fully ended these words that the people were in admiration at his doctrine. For he was teaching them as one having power"—let us say, as one who knew—"and not as the scribes and Pharisees,"¹ who, from their own experience at least, had been careful not to know or learn. In this light, throughout his great discourse to the people, did the Man of Sorrows reveal himself, the Man of others' sorrows as well as of his own, of others' sorrows because they were his own.

§ 2. TO THE TWELVE IN PARTICULAR

Jesus chose his Twelve. For a time he kept them with him, that by word and example they might learn of him; soon he sent them out to preach the kingdom, and to be witnesses in their turn. Before they parted, he delivered to them an address for their guidance. If the Sermon on the Mount revealed a heart that felt with the sufferings of men in general, much more did this address show

¹ Matt. vii 28, 29.

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sympathy for those who were destined to suffer for his cause. But it did much more; now a new vista was opened out to them. It taught them to look suffering in the face, to brave it, to seek it, to love it, even to find in it their joy and their glory, and the true measure of their success. The whole address rings with a note almost of defiance; and the defiance is based precisely on the fact that he has suffered before them, he their Master and Model, the model Man of Sorrows.

“The disciple is not above the master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the goodman of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of his household?”¹

Let us notice the illustration which the Master uses. To have been called that name had stung, and the agony of it had stayed; otherwise he would scarcely have recalled it.

But what were some of the sufferings that he would bid his disciples defy? Before, he had blessed the poor in spirit, making them content with their lot; now, he spoke of a poverty far more complete, of a spirit far more independent, of poverty that should be a glory:

¹ Matt. x 25.

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"Freely have you received, freely give. Do not possess gold, nor silver, nor money in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, nor two coats, nor shoes, nor a staff."¹

Before, he had spoken of meekness that would endure; now, his meekness was aggressive:

"Behold, I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves. Be ye therefore wise as serpents and simple as doves."²

Before, he had promised comfort to them that mourn; now, he spoke of no comfort, he made courage to face whatever trouble might come its own sufficient reward:

"Beware of men. For they will deliver you up in councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues. And you shall be brought before governors and before kings for my sake, for a testimony to them and to the gentiles."³

Before, he had spoken of persecution from men as the price of a great reward; now, he spoke of hatred as a settled thing, as part of the lot that would be theirs, a sign that would be upon them always, and would never be taken away:

"And you shall be hated by all men for

¹ Matt. x 8-10.

² Matt. x 16.

³ Matt. x 17, 18.

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my name's sake. But he that shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved."¹

It was a stern if glorious lesson, and it was long before the Twelve learnt it. Nevertheless, after he was gone, the day did come when its full light dawned upon them. One day it would be written of them:

"And they, indeed, went from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus."²

Nor did he stop there. Soon he took yet a further step. In the Sermon on the Mount he had promised blessing to those that suffered; later, in his sermon to the Twelve, he had encouraged his own to find joy in suffering for the simple reason that he had suffered before them; later again, after the foundations of the Church had been laid in the confession of Simon Peter, he hailed suffering, and bade men hail it, as the hall-mark by which alone his true disciples would be known:

"And calling the multitude together with his disciples, he said to them: If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and

¹ Matt. x 22.

² Acts v 41.

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the gospel shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"¹

And in the meantime, as he thus strengthens his teaching to them, so does he speak more emphatically about himself. It is just before this time that he begins that series of prophecies:

"From that time Jesus began to show to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the ancients and scribes and chief priests, and be put to death, and the third day rise again."²

Henceforward the two ideas are never very far from his mind: on the one hand the cross that awaits his followers, on the other the still heavier cross which he would carry before them. Mark the swinging of the pendulum, first to himself and then to his disciples:

"But while all wondered at all the things he did, he said to his disciples: Lay up in your hearts these words, for it shall come to pass that the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men."³

"And they were in the way going up to

¹ Mark viii 34-37.

² Matt. xvi 21.

³ Luke ix 44.

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Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them. And they were astonished, and following were afraid. And taking again the twelve, he began to tell them the things that should befall him, saying: Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man shall be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes and ancients. And they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the gentiles. And they shall mock him, and spit on him, and scourge him: and the third day he shall rise again.”¹

Then it swings back to his own:

“Come to me, all you that labour and are burdened: and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart, and you shall find rest to your souls. For my yoke is sweet and my burden light.”²

“I say to you, my friends: Be not afraid of them who kill the body and after that have no more that they can do. But I will show you whom you shall fear: Fear him who, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell. Yea, I say to you: Fear him. Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? Yea,

¹ Mark x 32-34.

² Matt. xi 28-30.

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the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore: you are of more value than many sparrows.”¹

§ 3. THE LAST SUPPER

One more discourse we have in which the Man of Sorrows revealed himself, and that is by far the most important of them all. It was at the last farewell, the supper with the Twelve. With the experience of his life behind him, with the Passion looming up immediately before him, and the further passion beyond, which these men would one day have to undergo, it was inevitable that again he should revert to the old subject—the place of suffering in life, in his own life and in theirs.

They sat down to the Supper. Almost at once there arose among the Twelve a quarrel. They were concerned about their respective seniority; so little even then did they realize the meaning of that last assembly, or the soul of him who, for the last time, sat at table with them. But he had patience with them. He had endured from them so much before, their uncouth manners, their petty ways, their

¹ Luke xii 4-7.

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forwardness, their spirit of contradiction, and then again their shrinking cowardice, their dullness of understanding, and with it their self-assertion; he had endured so much already, he would not surrender them now. They had, indeed, been bought at a great price, and he would not be angry with them now. In a new way he would settle their dispute, and at the same time teach them a lesson. Before, when they had quarrelled on this precise subject, he had taught them by setting a child before them, and making him their model; now he sets himself, he annihilates himself once more, he washes their feet as any slave might wash them. Henceforth let them dispute, not who shall be first, but who shall be the last among them.¹

Thus peace is restored, and he begins to speak his message of farewell. But he cannot proceed, there is one in their midst whose presence seems to paralyze his tongue; not until that man has gone out into the darkness is he able to say what he would.² He institutes the Blessed Sacrament; lavishly, as one who knows no limits in his giving, he bestows on them his own body and blood.

¹ Luke xxii 24-30; John xiii 1-20.

² Matt. xxvi 21-25; Mark xiv 18-21; Luke xxii 21-23; John xiii 21-35.

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They are unworthy, what does it matter? This is no time for laying down conditions. Let them have him all; let them eat and drink him; let them take him and, when they like, give him away to others.¹

Almost immediately, as if that act of generosity had exhausted him, a reaction begins to set in. He speaks of their coming desertion; that very night those Twelve, to whom he had given so much, who were so much to him, would leave him. They might not believe him; they may protest; but he knows better. In a few hours from now one will have betrayed him, and he will permit it; another will deny him, and he will pass it by and overlook it; every one of them will be scandalized in him and forsake him, and he will treat them, now and after, as if it were not. Instead he will find excuse for them; he will see it in all a fulfilment of prophecy and no more. So far as he is able, he will take the blame; since he is to be so humiliated in their eyes, how can they be expected to stand by him?

"For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be fulfilled in me: And with the wicked was he reckoned."²

¹ Matt. xxvi 26-29; Mark xiv 22-25; Luke xxii 19, 20.

² Luke xxii 37.

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"With the wicked was he reckoned!" It would come to that. At the beginning he had stood to be baptized among sinners, but there John, at least, had known him. He had submitted to be tempted as no man was tempted, but in the end Satan had confessed him "the holy one of God." He had forgiven sins, and had been called a blasphemer for it; but he had vindicated his honour. Other sinners had come to him, and he had stooped down to them; but though men had taunted him with being their friend, they had hesitated to make him one of them. Later they had ventured. "We know this man is a sinner," they had said; but he had silenced them by the more defiant question: "Which of you shall convince me of sin?" In all his life, whatever else men had said or done to him, this, at least, had been kept secure; they had not touched, however they had tried, the honour of his good name.

But now this, too, was to go. "He who knew no sin was made sin"; so one day would an apostle describe him. At last his enemies would call him "a malefactor," and he would not contradict them; his own would see him treated as such, and he would offer no resistance; worst of all, his oneness with sinful man would now press him down with all its fell

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significance. When we human creatures try to fathom what this means we are lost in darkness; we know remorse, we know fear, we know our contempt of ourselves, we know indignation, we know sadness, and contrition, and the agony of repentance; but we see only as in a glass after a dark manner. What would the agony be if we saw sin as it is in itself, as Jesus Christ saw it? It is here, more than anywhere else, that we should look for the Man of Sorrows, yet it is precisely here that human vision fails. Jesus Christ "made sin"; we know not what we say, but we know that in comparison with this, all the other sorrows of all his life were the merest trifles.

But for the moment he must lay the thought aside. Soon it will come back upon him in all its force and will crush him "even unto death"; now it is enough that he has said what he has said, showing that the shadow of it hangs over him. During the remainder of the Supper he has other work to do; he must think more of his own than of himself; he is troubled by the thought of their coming sorrow, and he must set himself to prepare them for it. It is his third great lesson. At first, as we have seen, in the Sermon on the Mount he had blessed those who suffered; later, in

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the sermon to the Twelve, he had filled them with his own courage; now he would inspire them with the joy of it, that joy that it alone could give, in that by its means they would be drawn nearer, ever nearer, to himself. Thus as he speaks, while giving them assurance, we feel him giving a like assurance to his own quivering soul.

"Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me."¹

"Have I been so long a time with you, and you have not known me?"²

"I will not leave you orphans. I will come to you."³

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, do I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid."⁴

"These things I have spoken to you that my joy may be in you, and your joy may be filled."⁵

"Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends."⁶

At this point he looks back. He has spoken of love, of that love which alone has made him give and give, and suffer and suffer on, which

¹ John xiv 1.

² John xiv 18.

³ John xv 13.

⁴ John xiv 9.

⁵ John xiv 27.

⁶ John xv 11.

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will make him give and suffer till no more is left. Had he no more to say it would have been enough; for he has just summed all up in the remark that the greatest love is love unto death. But there is the other side. He has given love, and what has he received in return? Had it been nothing at all, that would have been bitter; but it had not been nothing. He had received hatred, hatred positive and malicious; it is much for us to realize the fact, that from first to last Jesus Christ had been faced with men who positively hated him, and that here at the end the thought burns through his heart. He dwells upon it; he reads his own life in its lights; he sees that on his account his own will be hated with him. What can he do to save them from the agony he has gone through, but give them his own companionship in it all, show them that the hatred will come to them, not on their own account, but because of him?

"If the world hate you, know ye that it hath hated me before you. If you had been of the world, the world would love its own: but because you are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you: Remember my word that I said to you: The servant is not greater than his master. If they have perse-

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cuted me, they will also persecute you: if they have kept my word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for my name's sake: because they know not him that sent me. But that the word may be fulfilled which is written in their law: They have hated me without cause."¹

This, then, was the picture his life presented to him as he looked back upon it on that last night. Love unto death on the one side, hatred unto death on the other; love giving its all, hatred flinging the gift away; love in the end taking on itself the burthen of its enemy, hatred flouting love because of the burthen of which itself was guilty.

But he must come back to his own and the lives that were to be theirs. What he had said of himself had been said for a purpose; it would prepare them for what might be their own fate. On it he must build their encouragement now; later they would find it more than encouragement.

"These things have I spoken to you that you may not be scandalized. They will put you out of the synagogue: yea, the hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doth a service to God."²

¹ John xv 18-25.

² John xvi 1, 2.

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"But because I have told you these things, sorrow hath filled your heart."¹

"But I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man shall take from you."²

Once more, and for the last time, the pendulum swings. The mention of his love for men has made him think of their hatred for him; the mention of his fidelity to his own reminds him of their coming infidelity to him. it is his last remark; it seems almost to escape him. But he quickly recovers; on that note he will not end; his last word shall be one of encouragement and strength, for he has much yet before him.

"Behold, the hour cometh, and it is now come, that you shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. These things I have spoken to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you shall have distress: but, have confidence, I have overcome the world."³

¹ John xvi 6.

² John xvi 32, 33.

³ John xvi 20-22.

IV

THE MAN OF SORROWS IN HIS DEATH

§ I. THE IMMEDIATE PREPARATION

"BUT some of them went to the Pharisees, and told them the things that Jesus had done. The chief priests, therefore, and the Pharisees gathered a council and said: What do we, for this man doth many miracles? If we let him alone also, all will believe in him, and the Romans will come, and take away our place and nation. But one of them, named Caiphas, being the high priest that year, said to them: You know nothing. Neither do you consider that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people and that the whole nation perish not."¹

In this passage is signalled the coming of the Passion proper. It contains in it a note of cruelty such as we scarcely find, certainly not so deliberately expressed, in any other

¹ John xi 47-54.

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place in the Gospel story. "It is expedient!" Jesus has just raised Lazarus to life: this is inconvenient to Caiphas; therefore "it is expedient" for Caiphas that Jesus should die. He "hath done many miracles": this is inconvenient to the chief priests and Pharisees; therefore for them as well "it is expedient" that he should die. He has won many to believe in him; if he is left alone he will win them all: this is inconvenient to the politicians; therefore "it is expedient" that he should die.

But not on any of these grounds can he be condemned; what is expedient may not be just; but with a little cleverness it may be justified; therefore another pretext must be found. What that pretext might be mattered very little. A word that he had somewhere uttered could be twisted to their purpose, an action could be interpreted in any sense they chose, a motive could be invented. To none of such arguments is there any real answer, to reply to them is often only to make oneself the more suspect. All, then, that was wanted was a formula, a specious premise; the rest would follow in due course.

The President of the Council was equal to the occasion; he had not administered justice all these years for nothing. But first, before

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they sought a ground for accusation, he must satisfy the tender conscience of these just men that they were right. He gave them a proof, worded according to the strictest logic. Of two evils we should always choose the less. *Atqui*, that one man should die is an infinitely less evil than that the whole nation should perish. *Ergo*, in this case we should choose that one man should die. No, not only were they justified; to carry out this policy was the plain duty of men who had been entrusted with the welfare of the people.

Thus by a pretentious syllogism was Jesus Christ fore-condemned. It is the syllogism by means of which more injustice has been justified, particularly among "good" men, than by anything else in the world. The men who were capable of framing and yielding to such arguments were incapable of any other. They were incapable of seeing the truth, even that elementary truth that one may not do evil that good may come of it; the end does not justify the means.

Therefore for a time Jesus left them. As at Capharnaum, almost a year before, he had been respected, so now in Jerusalem the final decision was made. With a broken heart he could only contemplate the doom. He retired to Ephraim; thence he made a fare-

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well tour of the country he had loved and for which he had laboured; on the day of Palms he rode again into the city, to vindicate the truth and face the end. During the days that followed, while on the surface he proved his power in the sight of his enemies as he had never proved it before, underneath there is felt, beyond possibility of escape, an unspeakable agony, as of a love and friendship offered, and rejected, and trampled underfoot. St John tells the story of the parting in his own characteristic way. While the other Evangelists are anxious to champion their Master before his enemies, John throughout it all keeps his eyes upon the Man of Sorrows. Before the last time he leaves the Temple he hears him cry aloud:

"Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour."¹

It is an anticipation of Gethsemane. And as at Gethsemane, so here, he hears him as it were recover himself:

"But for this cause I came unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name."²

After which, with renewed courage, he is able to proceed:

"Now is the judgement of the world: now

¹ John xii 27.

² John xii 27, 28.

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shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself. Now this he said, signify what death he should die.”¹

§ 2. THE PASSION

When we come to the actual story of the Passion, what better can we do, for the purpose of this study, than just recall the facts as they occurred? They speak for themselves, better than anyone can elaborate them; by their own intrinsic evidence they prove their truth; by their dead weight alone, for any who can and will endure it, they tell more forcibly than any added words can make them. Much in the Passion we cannot hope to understand; the very description, the effort to realize what the description means, leaves us amazed, bewildered, almost stupefied. Much comes to us as through a mist; we dimly catch the meaning, we scarcely dare to do more, though we see how much there is beyond which we do not reach. The more we make ourselves ponder—for the effort has to be made—the more we find there is to be discovered, even if we go no further than through the simple narrative as the Gospels give it to

¹ John xii 31-33.

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us. Book after book has been written, by student and by saint, each one, it may be, adding something more to our knowledge and understanding, and yet we are well aware that the mine is not and cannot be exhausted; there will be fresh ore in it to the end.

For instance, what meaning are we to give to those opening words of St Matthew:

"He began to grow sorrowful (λυπεῖσθαι) and to be sad (ἀδημονεῖν)"?¹

Or to those of St Mark:

"He began to fear (ἐκθαμβεῖσθαι), and to be heavy (ἀδημονεῖν)"?²

Or to the words of both:

"My soul is sorrowful (περιλυτός) even unto death"?³

Whatever may be the full meaning (and that we shall never know), we have here before us Jesus Christ, a broken Man, broken as those who knew him had never seen him before, overwhelmed by grief—for what?—so that he would gladly die to be relieved of it; stunned with amazement and fear—at what?—so that he seems all but paralyzed; driven to what we would call distraction—by what?—so that he appears no longer to know which way to turn.

¹ Matt. xxvi 37.

² Mark xiv 33.

³ Matt. xxvi 38; Mark xiv 34.

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Or what is the meaning, such that we can form any adequate conception of it, of that "chalice" and its contents of which Matthew, Mark, and Luke all speak, and which appeared to him, even to him whose love made suffering welcome, something too much to be endured? Or of that agony which made him pray the longer, and which needed that an angel should be sent to support him?¹ Or of that sweat of blood which fear and alarm forced through the pores of his body, flowing in such abundance as to run down to the ground?² We look at all this and know that we are in touch with that which cannot be measured by any standards of our own; human as it is, human and therefore finite, yet it is suffering far beyond the power of any man to fathom, much less to experience in himself. Saints and mystics and theologians have given us various interpretations; they are all, perhaps, right, but none of them, not all of them together, have reached to the bottom of the ocean. That the Son of God should have "become sin"; that the Lamb without stain should have taken on himself all the sins of all the world; that, now, in some mysterious way, he should appear to stand "reputed with the wicked"—this was surely at the root

¹ Luke xxii 43, 44.

² Luke xxii 44.

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of all the sorrow, of itself enough to make death welcome, a chalice whose contents the holiest might well petition that he might not be compelled to drink.

But the truth, as we have said, includes every explanation; it includes very much more; human nature grows weary, turns away from the scene and welcomes sleep beneath the olive tree. The sorrow is such that the Son of God must perforce endure it alone; no other human being is equal to it; as he stood alone in the past, much more now must he continue.

The agony is over; but it is only the preliminary to more. "Jesus, knowing all that was to befall him"—St John once more is careful to remind us of this. He knew what was coming; at any moment he might have prevented it; he could have stricken those men down, he could have asked his Father, and he would have given him legions of angels; but he would not. Every step in the Passion was an act of deliberate acceptance; St John, and St Paul after him, can never let this single fact escape from their minds. "Christ loved me, and gave himself for me." "He was offered because he himself willed it."

Then follows the betrayal; by such a man,

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the most trusted of all his inner circle, to whom, moreover, he had given warnings in abundance; in such a way, the way of most intimate familiarity, abusing a privilege that few indeed could claim; to such people, who needed no traitor to put him in their hands, for had he not been among them every day? Under such circumstances that through all time that traitor and that crime have been taken as a byword for the basest deed that ever man could do to fellow-man.

"Hail, Rabbi; and he kissed him."¹

"Friend, whereto art thou come?"²

"Judas, dost thou betray the Son of man with a kiss?"³

To the astonishment of his disciples the deed of treachery succeeded. On other like occasions Jesus had passed through the crowd, but this time men laid hands on him and he submitted. Was his power, then, gone? Was there no further hope? What could they do but run away?

"The hour cometh, and now is come, that you shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave me alone."⁴

They bound him; they dragged him down the hill and up the other slope to the southern

¹ Matt. xxvi 49.

² Matt. xxvi 50.

³ Luke xxii 48.

⁴ John xvi 32.

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gate. They brought him to the court of the heartless Sadducee, Annas, who sat in solemn state with his priests, and his elders, and his scribes about him. What was there to be enacted could be nothing else than a thing of form; long since the sentence had been passed. And this, too, Jesus knew. He knew that he must be condemned, and must be condemned with all the forms of justice. Long since had these men decided on it; hatred unrelenting had sealed his fate, policy had invented the manner of it. Hitherto a mysterious something had kept him out of their grasp; now that something had suddenly deserted him; he was wholly at their mercy, and they could wreak on him what vengeance they would—vengeance for the way he had defied them from the first, vengeance for the rebukes he had bestowed upon them in their own Temple court, vengeance for the warnings he had given men against them, vengeance for the condemnation he had publicly pronounced, vengeance for all he had taught and they did not, vengeance for all he had done and they could not, vengeance, above all, for what he had claimed to be, and by irrefutable argument had proved it.

But, of course, it must not appear to be vengeance; what they would do must be done

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with all the forms of justice. It must be made manifest to all that they were right; he must be put in the wrong; and since not one of his deeds could be brought up against him, his words must be adduced, must be turned and twisted, and misquoted, and taken from their context, and so made to mean what they would have them mean. In the last resort this is always a safe method of conviction; when nothing else will serve one can quote a victim's words, by a shadow of an accent alter their whole meaning, say that he said them, or that someone said that he said them, and then put upon them any interpretation one may please. "The devil can quote Scripture to his purpose." No man ever yet spoke anything but malice can turn it, if it pleases, to its own ends. It is a safe device; it has the peculiar advantage that however cruel and unjust the inference may be, yet the fact cannot be denied; having so much of truth about it, it is the cruellest of lies.

So, in the first instance, was Jesus Christ condemned: condemned out of his own mouth; condemned by his own people; condemned by those who knew that their evidence was hollow, their inference utterly untrue, their sentence a base travesty of justice. On that very account, that they might

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support themselves in their mockery, as men will, they were driven to submit him to the greater shame. True justice is always merciful; consciousness of wrong is always cruel.

"And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him: Prophecy! And the servants struck him with the palms of their hands."¹

Nor is this all that he must endure "in the house of them that loved him"; his prophecy concerning Simon Peter is yet to be fulfilled. It is done within his sight and hearing. Simon disowns him, declares that he does not know him, confirms the declaration with an oath—the one man who, if he would, might have said a word in his favour. He does this in such a place, on such an occasion, at the taunt of a mere servant girl; after all that had been done for him, after all that he himself had promised, in spite of the repeated warnings he does it. He does it in spite of his love, for that Simon still loved his Master cannot be doubted; on that account it was a deeper wound than had been the treachery of Judas, Jesus heard it; heard it from the lips of Peter:

¹ Mark xiv 65.

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"And the Lord turning looked on Peter."¹

And that was all. But what had the denial meant to him?

He is thrown into prison for the night, left to the mercy of his gaolers. If before his judges they could strike him in the face and be countenanced, what might they not do now that they had him to themselves? And he let them do what they would.

Next day he must die; the Passover that was to follow would not allow these scrupulous men to wait longer. Once again, as before, the formalities of justice must be gone through. He must be handed over to the civil arm; Roman as well as Jew must be made partaker of this act of universal shame. So they fettered him again; they dragged him through the crowded streets, through the main thoroughfare of the city. What better proof than this could be given to the rabble of Jerusalem that the man they had begun to revere was an impostor? He who could not save himself, how could he be a saviour to others? The beggar said to have been healed in the north of the city, the man born blind cured in the south, who now would believe such old women's tales? And Jesus knew; knew what men would infer; knew the bitter

¹ Luke xxii 61.

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anger and resentment that must rise up on every side against him; and he endured it all.

They reach the house of Pilate; he is handed over to the Procurator; his own Jews surrender him to Romans. He is pursued with accusations; what they are matters not at all; so long as it will influence the Gentile, anything will serve. He is a malefactor, this has no pretence of evidence;¹ he destroys our nation;² he forbids men to give tribute to Cæsar;³ he says he is Christ the King.⁴ Truly a jumble of charges; a jumble of falsehoods founded on the faintest semblance of truth; just the confusion of accusations, inconsistent, haphazard, yet leading steadily to their goal, which determination to destroy alone could have brought together, and which, because of their sweeping generalities, it would have been impossible to refute.

But for just the same reason the shrewd, unbelieving Roman knew their hollowness. "He knew that for envy they had betrayed him." But Jesus was a Galilæan, a despicable Galilæan; then to Galilee's ruler he should go for sentence. From Pilate he is dragged again through the streets to Herod;

¹ John xviii 30.

² *Ibid.*

³ Luke xxiii 21.

⁴ *Ibid.*

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to Herod, the son of that Herod who had sought his life as an infant; Herod the crowned king of sensuality, the murderer of John the Baptist, who could be quelled by a dancing girl's sneer; who in his moments of remorse had trembled at the thought of this Jesus, lest he might be his victim John risen from the dead; who at other times, when the passion for revelry was on him, had long wished to have him in his hands that he might see his miracles; who by this Man himself had openly been called "that fox." Before such a man Jesus stood; by such a man he suffered that he should be judged, with the laughing court around him of ribald men and women, to whom vice the most degrading was their open profession, their very life. Jesus stood before them, and he needed not have stood there; he endured the loathsome sight and let them laugh; though once he had bidden Satan himself "Begone!" these men he permitted to do their will.

Herod, that man of moods, was now in the mood when he was glad to have Jesus at his mercy. He would make this conjurer perform before him; he would make him do his tricks to save his life. But it was of no avail. He spoke to him with civility; he spoke to him with threats, but

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"He answered him not a word."¹

And since Jesus would not turn his court jester, Herod would make him his court fool.

"And Herod with his army set him at nought, and mocked him, putting on him a white garment, and sent him back to Pilate."²

One reflexion on this scene we must make. All this time, Herodias and her daughter, where were they? The blood of the Baptist was still red upon their hands; because of that crime they hated everyone, because of him they hated this Jesus; they hated him the more because of the fear his name had roused in their lord and master. That they were present at this scene seems only too likely; may we not be sure that their laughter, shrill, hard, loud, triumphant, hideous, provocative, was not the least of the agonies of shame that Jesus endured in Herod's hall?

And "he answered not a word."³

What follows in the story of the Passion is nothing but the sheerest brutality. The refinements of cruelty are over; regard for even the external show of justice is gone; when Pilate, for his own sake, and for the honour of the Roman eagle, would preserve an appearance of law and order, he must be

¹ Luke xxiii 9.

² Luke xxiii 11.

³ Luke xxiii 9.

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howled down. Let man play with the trappings of justice long enough, and the day will come when he will throw them all aside, when injustice will become a boast and a glory. Let him play with falsehood, and one day he will take pride in his powers of deceit. He will take pride in his powers of deceiving even himself.

So was it on this occasion. Barabbas or Christ? That Barabbas was guilty no man would venture to deny, that Jesus was guilty not a soul believed; therefore let him be put to death, let Barabbas go free! How shall he be put to death? If he were a blasphemer, as some said, then he should be stoned; but they had attempted that before, and had failed. This time they must not fail. He was in hands that seemed able to hold him; therefore by those hands let him die. Let him be bled to death, drop by drop, hanging on a cross.

But his executioners demurred.

"You have presented unto me this man, as one that perverteth the people; and behold I, having examined him before you, find no cause in this man, in those things wherein you accuse him. No, nor Herod neither. For I sent you to him, and behold, nothing worthy of death is found done by him. I will

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chastise him therefore and release him.”¹

“I will chastise him therefore!” The logic of the conclusion! Step by step in this story of horror the gross injustice of every deed is manifest and acknowledged. When men persist in evil usually they will not think; or if they will, they justify themselves in what they do. With the murderers of Jesus it was not so. Let the Evangelist tell what follows in his own few words. He is unwilling to dwell upon its details; he will tell the simple fact and have done with it.

“Then the soldiers of the governor, taking Jesus into the hall, gathered together to him the whole band; and stripping him they put a scarlet cloak about him. And plaiting a crown of thorns, they put it on his head, and a reed in his right hand. And bowing the knee before him, they mocked him, saying: Hail, King of the Jews! And spitting upon him, they took the reed, and struck his head.”²

St Mark adds to this the one other detail: “When he had scourged him.”³

It is confirmed by St John:

“Then therefore Pilate took Jesus and scourged him.”⁴

¹ Luke xxiii 14-16.

² Matt. xv 15.

³ Matt. xxvii 27-30.

⁴ John xix 1.

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The scourging of Jesus was, as we have seen, part of his deliberate sentence; the crowning and the mockery were a piece of wanton cruelty, at the hands of men whose profession trained them to be cruel, whose amusement was sought in the sight of cruel deeds, who found in one another an incentive to ever greater cruelty, in whom the sense of pity had long been dead, if it had ever lived in them at all.

Pontius Pilate could not but have known what was going on in the courtyard behind him. But he did not move. If the Victim died beneath the torture, let it be so; in this way, at least, his problem would be solved. Slaves often perished by a like accident; his own reputation would be saved; and one life more or less, what would it matter? But Jesus would not die beneath the lash; then the condition to which he had been reduced might serve the Procurator's purpose. One so tormented, so tortured, so disfigured, that he could scarcely any more be called a man, would surely win the pity of the mob; contempt for their Victim, if nothing else, would modify their hatred. One so beaten, a helpless mass of bleeding flesh, could no longer be called a danger to the people; the very sight of him would be enough.

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"Pilate therefore went forth again and saith to them: Behold, I bring him forth unto you, that you may know that I find no cause in him. Jesus therefore came forth, bearing the crown of thorns and the purple garment. And he saith to them: Behold the man!"¹

Rather: "Behold what once had been a man! Behold a worm and no man! Behold the Model of all Manhood!"

But even this device was of no avail. He had reckoned on hatred as he knew it, of man for fellow-man; he had not reckoned on hatred such as this, of man for the Son of God. At the sight of him they cried out the more; he must be crucified; so long as God made man walked among them on this earth, hatred would never be appeased.

"And their voices prevailed." He was clothed once more in his own clothing; for the third time that morning was this singular humiliation done to him, and with it, for the third time, the wounds upon his body were opened. It was to be done to him yet again before that day was over. They took him down the steps into the streets; the heavy wood was put upon his shoulder; up and down the rugged streets he dragged it, with two "other" malefactors in his company, at

¹ John xix 4, 5.

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the end identified with sinners no less than during his whole life, more now at the end than it had ever been before. He had come to save his people from their sins; he had been baptized among them; he had eaten and drunk with them; he had submitted to be called their friend; he had welcomed their love and had returned it; he had invited them to come to him; he had gone after them, at what cost to himself! He had forgiven them their sins; on their account he had endured obloquy; he had asked them to take his yoke upon them, to carry his cross, and had promised that it would be sweet, his burthen would be light. Now in return he carried theirs, the whole weight upon him of all their misery, the shame and guilt flung at him like mud from the passers-by. He ascended their cross with them, was nailed hand and foot to it instead of them, that they in their turn might ascend and be nailed to his with him. "Jesus Christ, and him crucified." A fitting death-bed after such a life; yet also a fitting throne for the Man of Sorrows. "I, when I shall be lifted up, will draw all things to myself."¹

¹ John xii 32.

V

THE MIND OF HIS DISCIPLES

§ 1. ST PETER

THE most casual student of the first Epistle of St Peter cannot but be struck by the prominent place which the sufferings of his Master have in the mind of the Prince of the Apostles. The Peter of the Epistles is a very different man from that Simon who, in the early days, in his ship on the Lake of Galilee, fell at the feet of Jesus and bade him depart from him, for that he was a sinful man; very different from him who, in the height of his enthusiasm, would rebuke his Master and say that suffering and death should never be his lot; or from him again who, on Mount Thabor, found it good to be there and looked for nothing more. Now everything is changed. He no longer fears; the Man of Sorrows has become an ideal, an inspiration, a support whom it will not be hard to follow even unto death; Jesus Christ crucified means to him now more than Jesus Christ transfigured.

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When he sets out to guide his people, when he would encourage them in the midst of their hard days, this is the motive and the model he holds up constantly before them—the suffering of Jesus Christ, not in his Passion only, but throughout his life, and the manifest fruit it bore.

Thus, when speaking to his Jewish converts, he looks for the link between the old and the new, and he finds the only key to the prophecies of old in the sufferings of him who fulfilled them:

“Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and diligently searched, who prophesied of the grace to come in you. Searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ in them did signify, when it foretold those sufferings that are in Christ and the glories that should follow.”¹

He looks from the past into the future, and finds man’s inspiration in him who has been rejected, precisely because he has been rejected:

“Rejected indeed by men, but chosen and made honourable by God.”²

He sets before them an ideal; it is no other than Jesus Christ, not hanging on the cross, but bearing his cross from day to day:

¹ 1 Pet. i 10, 11.

² 1 Pet. ii 4.

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"For this is thankworthy, if for conscience' sake towards God a man endures sorrows, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, committing sin, and being buffeted for it, you endure? But if doing well you suffer patiently, this is thankworthy before God. For unto this are you called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow his footsteps. Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. Who, when he was reviled, did not revile: when he suffered, he threatened not: but delivered himself to him that judged him unjustly. Who his own self bore our sins in his body upon the tree; that we, being dead to sins, should live to justice: by whose stripes you are healed." ¹

Next, Peter would encourage his disciples to live up to that ideal; and again his encouragement is only this, that so Jesus lived and so he died.

"Christ therefore having suffered in the flesh, be you also armed with the same thought: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sins: that now he may live the rest of his time in the flesh, not after the desires of men, but according to the will of God." ²

¹ I Pet. ii 19-24.

² I Pet. iv 1, 2.

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Furthermore, he would offer them a reward. He does not forget that he himself once said: "Lord, we have left all and followed thee; what reward, therefore, shall we have?" But he has learnt much since then; and now his reward is the joy we shall have in having shared in the suffering of his Master, when at last his glory is revealed:

"Dearly beloved, think not strange the burning heat which is to try you: as if some new thing happened to you. But if you partake of the sufferings of Christ rejoice that, when his glory shall be revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy."¹

Last of all, he speaks of the witness to this as belonging to his special mission:

"Who am myself an ancient and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as also a partaker of that glory which is to be revealed in the time to come."²

§ 2. ST PAUL

St Peter has put the Passion and sufferings of Jesus before his individual followers as their inspiration, their consolation, their

¹ 1 Pet. iv 12, 13.

² 1 Pet. v 1.

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model, their encouragement, in their daily lives; St Paul, as is his wont, looks at them more with the eyes of the universal Church. Already in his first Epistle he sees in the sufferings of the cross the bond of common fellowship for all:

"For you, brethren, are become followers of the churches of God which are in Judæa in Christ Jesus: for you also have suffered the same things from your own countrymen, even as they have from the Jews: who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and have persecuted us, and please not God, and are adversaries to all men."¹

With the same thought in his mind, that suffering with Christ creates fellowship with one another, when later he has to blame the Galatians, his accusation is that they have failed to stand by the banner of the cross; for himself, to mark the contrast with them, he seeks for no other honour than that of having been loyal to it:

"O senseless Galatians, who hath bewitched you that you should not obey the truth: before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been set forth crucified among you?"²

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, as it is

¹ 1 Thess. ii 14, 15.

² Gal. iii 1.

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written: Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree.”¹

“God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world.”²

In the Epistle to the Corinthians this attitude becomes much more emphatic. Not only, as before, is loyalty to Christ crucified his special glory, to him Christ crucified is everything. In that consummation is summed up all the revelation that has come to man from God; it is the whole content of all his own preaching; anything else, by comparison, is of no value whatsoever; mystery as this may appear to those who do not see, it is nevertheless the truth, and to understand it is the highest wisdom. Let us not forget that St Paul, here as in all his epistles, keeps within his vision this world as well as the next; he is a statesman as well as a champion of the Gospel; in combined passages such as these one sees the marvellous consistency of the Apostle's mind, holding to the same idea and principle in the midst of much that may appear wandering and disconnected.

“For the word of the cross, to them indeed

¹ Gal. iii 13.

² Gal. vi 14.

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that perish, is foolishness: but to them that are saved, that is to us, it is the power of God.”¹

“We preach Christ crucified: unto the Jews indeed a stumbling-block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness: but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God.”²

“I judged not myself to know anything among you, but Jesus Christ: and him crucified.”³

“We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, a wisdom which is hidden, which God ordained before the world, unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew. For if they had known it, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory.”⁴

So he writes, with an emphasis almost of defiance, laying down his foundations before he justifies himself in the eyes of his quarrelsome and not too loyal neophytes in Corinth. They have turned against him; they have cut him to the quick; let them not think that this in any way puts him and his doctrine in the wrong. It does nothing of the kind;

¹ I Cor. i 18.

³ I Cor. ii 2.

² I Cor. i 23, 24.

⁴ I Cor. ii 7, 8.

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it does but prove that he is one with his Master.

But when the misunderstanding is over, and they have been reconciled, and peace has again been restored, then he writes in quite another strain. Not only now is the cross of Christ his glory; that he had said while his Corinthians were still inflicting sorrow upon him. It is also the very cause and source of his joy; and the greater has been his sorrow, so much the greater now is the joy he reaps. Let them not be troubled because of all they have done; in it all he has the more contentment, because by it the lesson of the cross has been the more thoroughly learnt. And he will show them why; though before God we are everyone sinners, yet in Jesus, and by the cross of Jesus, we are now all justified and free. In his life he became as one of us, shouldering our crosses, carrying our griefs; thus he has made us one with him, our cause has become his cause, and in return he has bestowed on us all his own riches. The lesson of the apostle is characteristic; in the midst of their repentance he makes his Corinthians rejoice, and that by reason of the very fault that they have committed; it is the lesson of his perfect charity.

"As the sufferings of Christ abound in

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us; so also by Christ doth our comfort abound." ¹

"Him, who knew no sin, he hath made sin for us: that we might be made the justice of God in him." ²

"You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that being rich he became poor for our sakes: that through his poverty you might be rich." ³

In the great dogmatic Epistle to the Romans the apostle has yet another point of view. In Christ we are redeemed and freed from the bondage of the law. But, it occurs to him, men may ask, was it necessary, seeing Jesus Christ was God, that redemption should be won at such a cost? Strictly necessary, he answers, no; but when we take into account the love in the heart of him who paid the price, yes. Such a love would have no half measures; it would give full measure and flowing over; down in the depths as man was, it would pay the fullest price to lift him to the highest.

"For why did Christ, when as yet we were weak according to the time, die for the ungodly? For scarce for a just man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man some one will dare to die. But God commendeth his

¹ 2 Cor. i 5. ² 2 Cor. v 21. ³ 2 Cor. viii 9.

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charity to us: because when as yet we were sinners according to the time, Christ died for us.”¹

Since the price has been paid so lavishly, with so little desert on our part, then he asks himself how we are to benefit by it to the full. The answer to him is clear; as by the cross we have received it, so in the cross we shall profit most by it. Likeness to Christ, in his life and in his death, gives us likeness in sonship and in glory.

“If sons, heirs also; heirs indeed of God, and coheirs with Christ: yet so, if we suffer with him, that with him we may also be glorified. For I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us.”²

Thus he rises to the ever-memorable climax, the conquest that has come with the love of the Man of Sorrows:

“Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or persecution, or the sword? (As it is written: For thy sake we are put to death all the day long. We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.) But in all these things we overcome, because

¹ Rom. v 5-9.

² Rom. viii 17, 18.

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of him that hath loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”¹

Such is the victory the Man of Sorrows has won. If, by his death, death itself has been conquered, so by his sorrow, sorrow has been turned into joy, failure has become triumph, wounds are an eternal glory.

In the Epistles of the Captivity, as might well be expected, yet a further aspect is put before us. The main work of St Paul has now been done; this “vessel of election,” who was to “carry my name before the gentiles and kings and the children of Israel,” and who was to be shown “how great things he must suffer for my sake,”² had faithfully carried out his task; now, as it were, in reward for his labour, lying bound in his Roman prison, he sees and is filled with the realization of the mystical body of Christ. Of that body Jesus is the head, we human beings are the members; from him life flows down to us, likeness to him comes now to have a new significance. We live, no, not we, but he lives in us; and

¹ Rom. viii 35-39.

² Acts ix 15, 16.

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merely because his life is ours, we only wish to know how that life may best express itself, how he may best reproduce himself in us. Hence the new tone in which he speaks henceforward of the cross; he no longer urges with encouragement; it is enough that he should state the likeness and leave the matter there.

"Be ye therefore followers of God, as most dear children: and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us and hath delivered himself for us, an oblation and a sacrifice to God for an odour of sweetness." ¹

"Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the church and delivered himself up for it:" ²

This, in those times, was new doctrine indeed.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal to God: but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of man, and in habit found as a man. He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross." ³

"I, Paul . . . who now rejoice in my sufferings for you and fill up those things

¹ Eph. v 1, 2. ² Eph. v 25. ³ Phil. ii 5-8.

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that are wanting in the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh, for his body, which is the church.”¹

“And you, when you were dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, he hath quickened together with him, forgiving you all offences: blotting out the handwriting of the decree that was against us, which was contrary to us. And he hath taken the same out of the way, fastening it on the cross.”²

§ 3. THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

The Epistle to the Hebrews must needs be taken apart; in it, and most explicitly, the sufferings of Jesus are given their most significant place with regard to men. Those to whom it was addressed were indeed in great trouble. Persecution had broken over them; there was nothing but failure and destruction everywhere; they had reason to ask themselves what could be the meaning of it all. If Christ had come to save the world, to give it a new life, why this continuous failure, this living death?

The apostle knows what they are feeling

¹ Col. i 24.

² Col. ii 14.

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and is full of sympathy. To comfort and strengthen them he plays throughout upon three themes; that so Christ had suffered before them, and that therefore by suffering they were made like to him; that through suffering he had conquered; that the fact of his suffering and glory was their sufficient encouragement and joy. In the first place, by his Passion and death, the oneness of the Saviour with the saved is secured; in the Passion, on this account, the Saviour and his work are made perfect.

"We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour: that through the grace of God he might taste death for all. For it became him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, who had brought many children unto glory, to perfect the author of their salvation, by his passion. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all one. For which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren." ¹

Being thus made one with man, not only is he himself made the perfect Saviour, not only is he a perfect high priest, but he has become, through experience of sorrow of

¹ Heb. ii 9-11.

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his own, a high priest and advocate merciful and faithful.

"Wherefore, it behoved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest before God, that he might be a propitiation for the sins of the people."¹

On this account, we may live in the sure hope, not only that we are redeemed, but also that he who has redeemed us, having given us so much and at such a price, will continue to give us all that he can give.

"Having therefore a great high priest that hath passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God: let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a high priest who cannot have compassion on our infirmities: but one tempted in all things as we are, without sin. Let us go therefore with confidence to the throne of grace: that we may obtain mercy and find grace in seasonable aid."²

This high priesthood, as Jesus himself many times declared, was not his own assumption, but was the appointment of the Father. Of himself as man he stood among men; of himself he suffered like other men; of himself he prayed with men, taking their guilt upon himself though he would have none of his

¹ Heb. ii 17, 18.

² Heb. iv 14-16.

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own; in their midst he was the accepted high priest, and in the hearing of his prayers, in the merit of his sufferings, in the acceptance of his sacrifice, their prayers and sufferings and sacrifice were made acceptable.

"Who in the days of his flesh, with a strong cry and tears, offering up prayers and supplications to him that was able to save him from death, was heard for his reverence. And whereas indeed he was the Son of God, he learned obedience by the things which he suffered. And being consummated, he became, to all that obey him, the cause of eternal salvation: called by God a high priest according to the order of Melchisedech."¹

Not only is he the high priest; he is also the sacrifice. And in that he offered himself, of his own accord and with full knowledge, elected to suffer and to die, and in that now in heaven he continues to renew that offering, therefore there was and is no need that the sacrifice be made more than once.

"For Jesus is not entered into the Holies made with hands, the pattern of the true: but into heaven itself, that he may appear now in the presence of God for us. Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the Holies every year with the

¹ Heb. v 7-10.

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blood of others: for then he ought to have suffered often from the beginning of the world. But now once, at the end of the ages, he hath appeared for the destruction of sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgement, so also Christ was offered once to exhaust the sins of many.”¹

From the consideration of this sacrifice and all that it has entailed, deliberate, entire, more awful than man can conceive, rendered yet more unfathomable by reason of the person of him, the God-man, who has endured it, the writer concludes to the great heinousness of sin. Since Christ has done all this, how much greater now must the evil of sin be!

“A man making void the law of Moses dieth without any mercy under two or three witnesses: how much more do you think he deserveth worse punishments, who hath trodden underfoot the Son of God and hath esteemed the blood of the testament unclean, by which he was sanctified, and hath offered an affront to the spirit of peace?”²

Hence the author draws to his final glorious conclusion. Let Jesus be to us not only the high priest and sacrifice, but also the model.

¹ Heb. ix 24-28.

² Heb. x 28, 29.

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He who has endured so much, and has proved the value of endurance, he is a worthy example for us all. Nay more; since he was of all the most beloved, then to be beloved is to be marked by suffering and sorrow. The lesson has been taught beyond a doubt; we have but to take it to heart.

"And therefore we also—laying aside every weight and sin which surrounds us, let us run by patience to the fight proposed to us: looking on Jesus, the author and finisher of faith, who, having joy set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and now sitteth on the right hand of the throne of God. For think diligently upon him that endured such opposition from sinners against himself: that you be not wearied, fainting in your hearts. For you have not yet resisted unto blood. And you have forgotten the consolation which speaketh to you, as unto children, saying: My son, neglect not the discipline of the Lord: neither be thou wearied whilst thou art rebuked by him. For whom the Lord loveth, he chastiseth: and he scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."¹

And much more to this effect. As we read we recognize the source of that resistance unto death which then and ever after has

¹ Heb. xii 1-6.

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formed the most glorious page of the Church's history. For them, indeed, teaching such as this was very living. The Epistle to the Hebrews is the charter of the martyrs; and it is written with the blood of Jesus, the Man of Sorrows.

§ 4. ST JOHN

Let us end as we began, with St John, the disciple whom the Man of Sorrows loved, and who, in the light of love and sorrow, read with greatest accuracy the heart of his Master. "He ought to have suffered often from the beginning of the world."¹ Can this sentence from the Epistle to the Hebrews be the source of that emblem which dominates St John's Apocalypse? The Lamb of God—the Lamb that was slain—the Lamb that was slain from the days of Moses—the Lamb that was slain from the beginning of the world—the blood that "is being shed" for many unto the remission of sins; we seem to see growing on his vision the glory of the Lamb whose light enlightens heaven.

"And the city hath no need of the sun, nor of the moon, to shine in it. For the glory of

¹ Heb. ix 25.

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God hath enlightened it: and the Lamb is the lamp thereof.”¹

In his Gospel we have heard John’s repeated lamentation, that “He came unto his own and his own received him not.” At the moment when the greatest dereliction was looming up he has recorded the assurance of the Master that “sorrow shall be turned into joy”; now when we come to his final word it is one of triumph, and the triumph is that of “the Lamb that was slain from the beginning of the world.”²

“And I saw: and behold in the midst of the throne, and in the midst of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the ancients, a Lamb standing, as it were slain.”³

“And they sang a new canticle, saying: Thou art worthy, O Lord, to take the book and to open the seals thereof; because thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God, in thy blood, out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation.”⁴

“The Lamb that was slain is worthy to receive power and dignity and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and benediction.”⁵

¹ Apoc. xxi 23. ² Apoc. xiii 8. ³ Apoc. v 6.

⁴ Apoc. v 9.

⁵ Apoc. v 12.

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As are the triumph and glory of the Lamb, so is the triumph of those who follow him. The lesson has been taught and learnt; all things have been made new; as with him, so with them, with them because of him, the cross and all it stands for, suffering and sorrow and distress, have become an ideal, not a doom, to which mankind has learnt to rise. The curse of life has been conquered; men have found the way "to rejoice that they are accounted worthy to suffer something for his sake"; and in that rejoicing have wrested from death its victory, have deprived it of its sting.

"After this, I saw a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and in sight of the Lamb, clothed with white robes and with palms in their hands."¹

"And he said to me: These are they who have come out of great tribulation and have washed their robes and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they are before the throne of God: and they serve him day and night in his temple. And he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell over

¹ Apoc. vii 9.

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them. They shall no more hunger nor thirst: neither shall the sun fall on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall rule them and shall lead them to the fountains of the waters of life: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”¹

At the beginning we have heard John lamenting; here at the end we hear him rejoicing; we understand now the source of that courage which he inspires in his children, when in his Epistle he bids them lose all that they may gain all.

“Wonder not, brethren, if the world hate you.”²

“In this we have known the charity of God, because he hath laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”³

Thus does John interpret the cross of Jesus Christ as the key to life, on earth and in heaven; the source of all that is noblest and best in man, the mark above every other of that very civilization which man has been bold to call Christian. *In hoc signo vinces.* “In this sign shalt thou conquer.”

Of a truth, then, the Man of Sorrows is

¹ Apoc. vii 14-17.

² 1 John iii 13.

³ 1 John iii 16.

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also the Man of Joy; he has fulfilled his prophecy in himself. He is, moreover, the Man of Victory. Without the cross of Christ what would this world be; what would be the value of eternity? With the life and death of Jesus Christ a new thing has come into the world, a new standard by which all things are judged. He has declared a new doctrine, and by his life has proved it: that suffering and sorrow are not the curse of man, but his privilege; that he who would do the greatest things is he who can endure the greatest; that only by suffering and sorrow can the evil of life be overcome; that the life of trial is the life which, by its first and noblest instinct, human nature most reveres, because it is most like his own. He "came not to destroy but to perfect"; nowhere more is it manifest than here. Human nature measures worth by suffering; it esteems in proportion as it sees the brave endurance of sorrow; and Jesus Christ has taken this truest trait in man, has purified and made it perfect, has identified it with himself, has given it back to man to be his abiding ideal in this world, has lifted it up with himself into heaven and there has enthroned it, "the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world." We understand the better now why, when he rose from the

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dead, he was careful to show that he retained in his hands and feet and side his precious wounds, carrying them with him as trophies to his place by the right hand of the Father, "ever living to make intercession for us."

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